

**SUBJECT:** Continuing the State Aircraft Pooling Board

**COMMITTEE:** State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 13 ayes — Wolens, S. Turner, Bailey, Brimer, Counts, Craddick, Danburg, Hunter, D. Jones, Longoria, McCall, McClendon, Merritt

0 nays

2 absent — Hilbert, Marchant

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, March 22 — 30-0-1, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

**WITNESSES:** (*On House companion bill, HB 1894:*)

For — None

Against — None

On — Bill Clayton, State Aircraft Pooling Board; Ken Levine, Sunset Advisory Commission

**BACKGROUND:** In 1979, the 66th Legislature created the State Aircraft Pooling Board (SAPB) and transferred most state-owned aircraft to the new agency. The SAPB's mission is to operate and maintain aircraft owned or leased by the state. The board consists of three members — one each appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, and House speaker to serve six-year staggered terms — and two ex-officio members. The ex-officio members, representing the State Auditor's Office and the General Services Commission, serve as non-voting advisory members.

The SAPB had a budget of about \$2.7 million for fiscal 2000, with funds about equally split between appropriated receipts (\$1.4 million) and interagency contracts (\$1.3 million). The board employs about 42 employees at its facilities at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. SAPB moved to Austin-Bergstrom in 1999 after the 75th Legislature in 1997 authorized issuance of about \$7 million in bond proceeds and \$5 million in property-sale proceeds for the relocation.

Overall, the state owns 53 aircraft, including 15 single-engine planes operated by Texas State Technical College (TSTC) for pilot instruction in Waco. SAPB operates and maintains 13 aircraft, of which 11 provide most transportation services and two are special-purpose aircraft not used for passenger transport. In 1999, the SAPB flew 8,966 passengers a total of 572,539 miles. The board also provides maintenance and repair services for all state-owned aircraft except the TSTC-Waco instructional aircraft, as well as fuel and hangar storage facilities for all Austin-based state aircraft.

SAPB will be abolished September 1, 2001, under the Sunset process unless continued by the Legislature.

**DIGEST:**

SB 304 would continue the SAPB through September 1, 2013. It would require the board to develop a long-range plan for using and replacing its aircraft fleet and to include that information in its legislative appropriations request. The long-range plan would have to include estimates on future aircraft replacement and other fleet management needs, including information on the use of each aircraft, operating costs and revenue estimates, and the demand for the aircraft.

SB 304 would require the board to post information on its flight schedules and costs on an Internet web site generally accessible to state agencies and the public. It also would include standard sunset language on handling complaints and providing employees with information about the State Employee Incentive Program.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2001.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

SAPB provides necessary and cost-effective services to state officials and employees and should continue its operations. SAPB also has an excellent safety record. Various state agencies and university and junior college systems must serve all cities and regions across Texas' huge expanse. While commercial airlines serve only 17 Texas cities, SAPB flew into 382 different airports in the state in 1999 and assisted more than 50 state agencies.

SAPB operations provide for flexible scheduling and save the costs of private charter flights. State aircraft also allow for complete work days and a reduction of overnight stays, saving money for state agencies and increasing

the productivity of state employees. SAPB already has instituted an Internet web site to provide information about its services.

SB 304 would require development of a long-range plan for the state's future aircraft needs. This would help the Legislature in its future decisions about appropriations to fund aircraft replacements.

OPPONENTS  
SAY: No apparent opposition.

NOTES: The companion bill, HB 1894 by Bosse, et al., was considered in a public hearing by the House State Affairs Committee on March 12 and left pending.